Between the Lines

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THE CHRISTIAN LAYMAN'S INFORMATION SERVICE
CONDENSED, NON-DENOMINATIONAL

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The South's No. 1 Problem

The newspapers gave good coverage to the struggle in Congress recently during which a bloc of Senators prevented the now famous poll tax repeal bill from becoming a law. The papers in some areas in the South suppressed news on this but for the most part our readers should have been well informed on this fight through regular news sources. We have not, therefore, given space to the controversy in our reports to you of significant trends.

Now that it is over, however, our listening posts have brought to light some facts that have not been told in the press and which we feel are of lasting importance.

The Southern Senators and opponents, who think they have the question licked for another twenty-five years, are all wrong. The real fight has not begun yet! We have been reliably informed that the left-wingers in Washington and the communists, who are counting much on the negro issue as fertile ground for the cultivation of seeds of violence and class strife, are delighted with the undemocratic behavior of the Southern Senate bloc, in its manoeuvring of the issue so that it never had a chance to be considered in terms of normal, democratic processes.

It is true that the bill as it stood would never have been accepted by those Southern communities where the educated, property-owning whites are outnumbered by throngs of uneducated and often slovenly negroes. In such sections, the repeal of the poll tax law would have swept the negroes into the position of being able practically to vote the property-owning whites out of existence.

Perhaps it should be said that not enough Northerners realize that sincere Southern Christians believe a sudden repeal of the poll tax would be a disastrous thing in many places to black and white alike. It would open the negroes to the manipulation of vicious political interests who would be quick to capitalize on the new flood tide of power they could capture, for their own selfish ends, from the negroes.

What many intelligent Christians in the South pray for, is a reasonable process of change that would begin now by affording greatly increased democratic privileges to that negro who is able to use them with reasonable civic responsibility, and to widen these privileges as speedily as possible—that is, as rapidly as negro civic and community leaders could organize and train their people for the wider obligations of citizenship.

Instead of such a program, a poll tax repeal bill was pushed upon the Congress without any intelligent study of the problem in the spirit of democracy. The Deep South Senators bustled around and

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Tuck in Loose Ends

Every American family must get ready now to adjust itself quickly to many unaccustomed things:

First—While victory is ahead, this war is going to hurt more than most of us imagine. Casualty lists are going to be much heavier than we expect. In a couple of months we will likely find out that they are heavier now in Africa than we think. America was somewhat stunned recently when the War Department at last told the whole story of Pearl Harbor. Many guessed the facts, but now we all know that Pearl Harbor was a severe defeat and a great disaster. America is winning battles now but it is hurting far more than we know. We are too accustomed to hearing that "American casualties were light". When we have really come to grips with the enemy it isn't going to be that way. What happened in some of those half-hour naval battles in the Solomons should give us an idea. Both Germany and Japan will rise to unprecedented heights of savagery before they go down. We must steel ourselves for severe losses. We must realize fully that it will take that to win this kind of war.

Second—Shortages are now on the way. Milk and butter are going to be scarce in many areas. Meat, canned goods, fuel oil, eggs, and other daily necessities are rapidly being used up far beyond our stores. Our whole transportation system is nearer a breakdown—or nearer drastic action to save it—than we suspect. Rationed travel will come quickly now unless the public stays home when travel isn't necessary. A forced savings plan, **in addition to** that victory tax we're already worrying about, is now definitely being designed in Washington. The government war financing plan is not working well and several things will have to be done. They will all affect us and our pocketbooks.

These things are being said to you here and in the pages of the daily press. We just wanted to do the service to our readers of saying "They're not kidding. It is real. Tuck in all your loose ends tightly."

Church Schools Hard Hit

Another thing, which we have spoken of before, is now drawing close. There is great danger that scores of Christian colleges are going to fold up within a few months. The only way many of them will survive is by the government's using them for military training bases of various kinds.

Those are the lucky ones. The rest, left to their own resources, and with the eighteen and nineteen year old draft coming in, will have their foundations cut away from under them. The high taxes leave very few places for harried money-raising presidents of these denominational schools to turn to for "maintenance funds" that formerly made up deficits. Such maintenance funds in the past have kept the schools limping along but doing magnificently one of the most important jobs in the cultural life of America.

Does it mean that from now on we'll no longer have young leaders coming up with the deep quiet strength of Christian character on which to build their lives? A surprising percentage of America's best leadership is the product of denominational schools. It will be an irreparable loss to the spiritual and cultural life of America if those many brave little colleges go under.

Unions Work Toward Union

That long predicted move toward a congealing of labor unionism into one united body of power is at last under way. The CIO and AFofL have taken the first important steps in this direction. Joint committees have been organized in cooperation with the government labor boards. It is hard to overemphasize the far-reaching importance of this trend. It is the first time in the history of American Labor that such steps have been taken. We began forecasting it to our readers early last spring. By another spring it may well be an overwhelming factor in our political life.

Three Points

Between the Lines is not anti-Catholic. We have a good many liberal-minded young Catholic subscribers who have expressed their appreciation for this information service. Because of this, we have tried very hard not to report anything that could be interpreted as prejudiced or unfair to the Catholic Church. We very frequently report things that reflect critically against Protestant churches and if we are to serve adequately the need an information service is designed to fill, we cannot overlook important developments that involve the Catholic Church and its policies as an institution.

There are three points of special importance that the well-informed Christian layman should know:

1. Gambling among the young has become a great social problem. The widespread playing of bingo is believed by social scientists to be one of the chief causes of the increase of gambling on the part of our youth. Officials in many

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gave the world a shameful picture of our democracy. Unfortunately in many areas the political cliques of the South are still ruled by those who do not intend the negro, no matter how well educated he is or how able and decent in character, ever to have a place simulating equality or economic justice. These influences rule the Senate bloc; they would not compromise; they threw democracy out of the window and filibustered.

The communists and real left-wingers are delighted. They can now tell thirteen million negroes anybody can see that the white bosses have no intention ever of giving them anything, that it will take force to do it, and that there is no hope for the negro in the slow, futile, democratic methods. As one pamphlet we saw put it, "Black man! Find out who your friends are and let them show you how."

The tragedy is that while millions of younger Christians in the South see this and are eager for progress to be made in solving the question, many religious leaders of the older generation are still blindly muttering pious phrases into the wind to hold back the storm. Will they linger in power too long? Or will the younger leadership arrive to displace them in time to help us solve the problem in terms of Christian discipleship rather than in bitterness and tears?

In connection with the above information, we have received other tips from various authentic circles in the South that political winds are changing drastically below the Mason-Dixon Line. Heretofore "the solid South" never let anything turn it from loyalty to the Democratic party. It has stuck by President Roosevelt when very little in his program tasted like julip or smelled like mint. However, the Administration's race policy coupled with the wide open pro-labor, pro-unionism of the New Deal, has gone too far. The South is bitterly anti-union, and many a Southern Congressman has bolted for the corridors when the New Deal racial viewpoint got on the floor.

We reported to you the beginnings of this trend some weeks ago, in our issue of November 9, when we told of the speeches being made and the letters being circulated among Southern leaders by the big political boss of Alabama, Horace Wilkinson, and by Governor Dixon of the same state. Such activities would put lesser fry in prison for sedition.

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cities have tried to curb games of chance, slot machines and bingo to check these harmful influences. The stories of the experiences these officials have had with priests of several localities who have used bingo as a source of revenue for their church treasuries, would provide hours of sad and depressing reading.

2. If topflight Roman Catholic authorities continue to denounce, in most unbecoming terms, the long-established Protestant missions and churches in Latin America on the basis that Latin America is a closed area where no one should be allowed to be anything but Roman Catholic, then this same American Catholic hierarchy must not expect us to take seriously its "Manifestos" of blessing on the war as a war fought "for the freedom of the soul of man". Protestant missions have been in Latin America a long time and there are many strong Protestant churches there that have a fine tradition and history behind them. What does the hierarchy mean by "freedom of the soul of man"? The greatest document of Christian democracy has considerable to say about man's right to worship God as his conscience dictates as true "freedom of soul".

3. This fall there has been a wave of denunciation of the American public schools by Catholic bishops over the country as they urged their parishioners to send Catholic children to the parochial schools. Protestants do not object to parochial schools. We accept them as part of our great free democratic system. However when it comes to building parochial schools by condemning our democratic system of public school education which has been the life blood of American democracy, we believe intelligent progressive Catholics realize the Church officials are slipping onto dangerous ground. The spiritual shortcomings of our educational system are **great,** but it remains a glorious achievement that Americans are proud and sensitive about...especially in contrast to the areas like Spain, Poland, Mexico and elsewhere where Catholic officialdom has had full sway for centuries to express its educational ideals for the masses.

Speaking of Charters

Walter Reuther, of the United Auto Workers, has declared: "The Atlantic Charter has to be brought down to earth. If I were a sharecropper or negro, I would say, 'The Atlantic Charter is fine, but what about a Mississippi Charter?'" In view of the recent number of lynchings, this point should have thoughtful consideration.

North African Problem

Through the channels of the uncensored **Worldover Press,** we have received the clearest report of the situation behind the scenes in North Africa and France arising out of the American invasion. It seems that the peculiar divisions of French opinion which has led to so many contradictory accusations are explained by social cleavages greatly magnified by the pressure of France's distress.

For instance, Maxine Weygand is cited as an example of the type of Vichy official who advocated surrender in order to stave off revolution from the Left, but who, after the armistice, worked against the Nazis in every field which did not threaten to precipitate revolution. Weygand was a patriot, filled with secret hatred of the Nazis, but turned "collaborator" through fear of a French or Arab communist revolution.

Few Americans have realized that this fear of a Left revolt was an element in the collapse of France. The Germans demanded Weygand's return from North Africa because he had built up an anti-Nazi general staff there; because he had allowed his soldiers to know that he was awaiting an appropriate moment for taking revenge; because he had hidden stores of arms and munitions; because he had sabotaged the work of the German and Italian armistice commissions; and because he had placed under police supervision, had arrested, and had even shot Frenchmen, Arabs, foreigners, and also Germans and Italians who had had supicious dealings with these commissions. Yet when the Germans demanded it, he resigned. He resigned because he was afraid of an Arab uprising with which Nazi propaganda had constantly threatened him in the event of too serious opposition.

Weygand's case was typical of the state of mind of part of the French "ruling class". Although secretly proud of their sons who demonstrated in the schools against the German occupation, still these men feared resistance to the Germans because they knew that it was bound to touch off an internal social struggle in France, a communist-led revolution, which they dreaded above all.

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It now seems that action is crystalizing among Southern political bosses to save the Democratic party in '44 from New Dealism by promoting leadership and candidates who know what the color line is and will respect it, and who, with Old Glory wrapped around expansive midriffs, will go gunning as quickly against union organizers as against Japanese or Germans.

Watch what Mr. Roosevelt and the Administration leaders do to meet this threat. There are many important factors hinging upon these trends.

Urge New Indian Policy

Distinguished American religious and lay leaders are asking President Roosevelt to effect a conciliatory attitude toward Indian problems on the part of the British government, while, on the other side of the Atlantic, the liberal **Manchester Guardian,** together with Laborites and prominent clergymen, is warning the British government of danger to come should it continue its present Indian policy.

Churches and Workers

One of the most significant developments in labor papers is the tendency to give space to any religious news related to labor's interests. Recently several important labor papers reprinted a report by the Federated Council of Churches of Christ in America concerning the failure of the government and local communities to recognize and plan adequately for the care of children and families of war workers where both men and women have been drawn into employment by government propaganda.

One reason for the interest of the unions in the strengthening and safeguarding of the home front is due largely to the entry of women, in ever increasing numbers, into the labor ranks. Their power, as a group, is becoming more and more evident. The CIO national news weekly devotes an entire page to the activities of women workers and CIO auxiliaries, and to the problems of working mothers. This new importance to labor of women workers is bound to cause a tremendous change in labor relations for it is not likely that the women will allow their growing influence in unionism to diminish or passively permit the racketeering of union leaders. This whole situation means that unionism will be part of the home life of millions of Americans and that the power of unionism is **definitely established** as one of the most important factors in American life.

And while we find an increasing stream of material concerning churches and the working man in the labor press, we look in vain for much interest or space given to labor, to labor interests, and labor problems, in religious periodicals.

IT'S STILL NEWS

Men were astonished in the fields when the heavenly host proclaimed the good news of God's plan for man's redemption. It came at a time when brutality and oppression straddled the earth. The proclamation that peace and goodwill could rule supreme brought hope to countless hearts. Yet today, 2000 years later, man has still refused to accept God's plan. Brutality and oppression still straddle the earth. Man's selfish plans have never yet been surrendered to God's plans. And on this Christmas night there will be millions of men "in the fields keeping watch" to whom the news of "peace on earth, goodwill to men" would be as much of a surprise and as welcome as it was long ago on the hills of Judea. Now that the church is able to multiply the news to all the earth, can't we at last make men hear it and believe it?

Massacre

Reports in Jewish circles, some of which have appeared in New York papers, indicate that the Nazis are systematically trying to destroy the entire Jewish population of Europe. The stories of the mass murder of Jews which have come out of Poland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, France, Holland and other conquered areas, are stories hardly credible in their account of the horrible butchery which is being inflicted upon a helpless minority.

The report recently issued by the Polish Government in exile is typical. Only the able-bodied Jew is spared and he is condemned to "slave labor". Should he be ill for more than two days his usefulness in the ranks of forced labor is considered at an end and he is killed. Old people and cripples are ruthlessly shot. Gas chambers are used to kill hundreds at a time. Entire populations are "resettled": They are crowded into box cars whose floors are covered with lime or chlorine. More than half die of suffocation before they are released, the remainder more often than not is murdered.

The figures of these killings are in the realm of the fantastic: 160,000 German Jews have been deported or killed, 600,000 Polish Jews have perished, two-thirds of the Jewish population of the Netherlands is dead, 35,000 of the 300,000 Jews in France have been deported, and the reports from other enslaved countries are in proportion.

"Dissipated and Misused Funds"

Senator George Aiken has made public a letter to Chairman David I. Walsh, of the Senate Naval Affairs Committee, demanding that the expenditure of public funds by the U. S. Maritime Commission be investigated. Senator Aiken is not one to fire blanks. He accuses the Commission of "rashly dissipated and misused funds".

Some of the Commission's transactions, he said, "appear to go beyond the realm of dissipation. They smell to high heaven of rank incompetence and collusion with private interests, for which the Maritime Commission and its chairman (Rear Admiral Emory S. Land) should be held accountable."

Among the charges, Senator Aiken included the following: Payment of exorbitant and outrageous prices for old and obsolete ships and payment of unwarranted subsidies for construction based on foreign costs long after foreign competition ceased to exist.

This situation is especially important to watch because Rear Admiral Land has been lambasting labor and has been strongly supported by the general press. The question now is whether the press won't hush-hush the whole thing to favor Admiral Land and save the face of the big shipping trusts involved.

Congress has been doing a fine job of digging out shady deals in both the field of big business and the government bureaus so something may happen here.

struggle in France, a communist-led revolution, which they dreaded above all.

The other part of the Vichy leadership was frankly pro-Nazi. These were the adventurers like Laval who had nothing to lose and thought they had everything to gain from backing the Nazis; who recognized that the war itself was a world-wide civil war and knew on which side their interests lay. These men were not as typical of the "upper-crust" French opinion as were the Weygands, but they were a well-known international phenomenon which had bobbed up in Italy, in Germany, in Spain— wherever Fascism was on the march.

As for the French workers, they felt, almost to a man, that they had been sold out by the bourgeoisie. Of a radical turn of mind anyway, they soon recovered from the initial shock of defeat. They held back from organized resistence because they did not know whether Britain would or could give them real and effective aid, and they were not disposed to allow themselves to be massacred uselessly.

With the entry of Russia into the war the picture changed. Among the French communists were to be found the more skillful and daring organizers, and sabotage and street demonstrations spread rapidly with the improvement of the machinery of organized opposition. Yet up to the American invasion, open insurrection involving nation-wide strikes was still not possible for three reasons: a million and a half Frenchmen were still prisoners of war in Germany; tens of thousands of militant revolutionaries were still in French prisons, and the opposition missed their ability and daring; the lack of assurance of prompt and effective aid from the outside led to doubts as to whether gains temporarily won through mass revolutionary action could be held against the armed forces of the Nazis.

This explains why the eyes of the French workers were turned toward America, and why they have constantly kept their radios tuned to London or New York expectantly awaiting the message that finally came to them on November 8.

The political situation confronting the Americans in North Africa is therefore crucial and urgent. The decision must be made at once as to whether the Weygand-Petain-Darlan elements are to be embraced, along with their fear of the French workers and social change, or whether the French workers, who have carried the banner of resistance, and who want to see a new deal in France, will be backed to the limit by the Americans. The divisions between the two is deep and bitter, and any attempt on the part of the United States to straddle the issue might well lead to an irreparable moral and political Dunkirk.

Letter from India

We want to share with you an excerpt from a remarkable missionary letter made available to us through the kindness of the American Baptist Foreign Mission Society. It is from Rev. and Mrs. Philip Geary, of India, and provides a vivid, rich picture of a missionary's daily task in war-clouded India. Part of its interest lies in its aloofness from the war:

"We are well and safe... the community in which we are living is moving along as slowly and peacefully as ever! That does not mean that the things you have been reading in your papers are untrue or even exaggerated. It simply means that there are few Congress workers in our town and no large student institutions. Let me quote one or two items from today's local newspaper, however, to give you an idea what has gone on elsewhere; one headline reads: 'Mobs machine-gunned from air in five places.' In his speech in the Central Legislature yesterday, Sir Sultan Ahmed gave the following description of the ferocity of mob tactics in the killing of two Air Force officers. He said: 'These two young officers were traveling as ordinary passengers in a train and were not on duty in connection with the disturbances. Their train was attacked by an angry mob and stones were hurled at the windows of the carriage in which the two officers were traveling. Attempts were made to pacify the mob but in vain. Finally the officers left their carriage and stepped to the platform. They were both set upon immediately and hacked to death in a most brutal way!'

"Editorials in native papers are calling upon the Allied Nations, especially America and China, to intervene and settle the 'Indian Deadlock' and we are wondering if any such course will be pursued. Conditions are critical here and this tragedy is especially appalling in view of the general world confusion and chaos.

"We took a camping tour through a number of Santal villages and in one large village we found the entire male population absent! They had gone off in search of a 'Witch Finder.' The common belief among the Santals is that a woman witch in the village is the cause of sickness. The men go to a witch finder, who reveals the identity of the witch in the village. When the 'witch' is discovered she is either fined, beaten or killed. In one village two old women were killed recently under this condemnation.

"Let me contrast this superstition with another superstition of rather recent origin. Non-Christians are dealing with the matter of sickness in a new way. This new technique has grown out of the respect the non-Christian has for the Christian and his Holy Book. In one village when a non-Christian is ill he sends to the home of a Christian and asks for a little of their cooked rice believing that if he eats the Christian's food, he will recover from his sickness. As a sort of double cure, or guarantee, he also asks for a copy of the Bible, and placing it under his pillow, rests assured that health and strength is on the way. I'm sure that the pastor does not encourage such belief or practice among the ignorant, but the illustration does prove that true Christians are looked upon as folk in touch with God!

"We were able to push on into some new territory and it was a new experience for us to realize that we were facing a group of people who had never heard the great message although it had been sounded forth these 1900 years. There must be many, many such villages in India and in other parts of the world, but this was the first one we had seen, and it was a solemn experience.

"In another village folks of all ages had gathered at the house of the only Christian man in the community. The long veranda was filled with listeners when suddenly the shout of a man boomed out with the cry of 'Hati Hati'. This meant but one thing—elephants. Those creatures are nocturnal visitors in that part of the country and make their forages into the rice fields in search of new tender plants. All the men grabbed torch, bow and arrow, and charged the invader. The folks were running in all directions, the bark of the dogs was pitched to a frenzied wail, the children began to cry in earnest—and so our meeting ended! We had tried our best but this time the elephant upset the apple cart.

"Results are not immediately visible. In my brief observation of the work here it seems that those who are becoming Christians are those who have been influenced by the Christ-like way of living of a father or mother or relative. The non-Christian does not come to a quick decision when he listens to the evangelist, but if he is able to see the evanglist's message come to life in a relative, or friends, then indeed he is moved to believe.

"By way of contrast, let me picture some other religious activity. A snow peak in the Himalayas is named for Siva, one of the trinity of the Hindu gods, and a famous temple there is a sacred shrine. To reach the shrine means a long arduous journey on foot. Hundreds of people, holy men who have renounced all worldly things, rich men, young men, old women and old men, some of whom come from great distances, make this pilgrimage. The glacier at the snow mountain gives rise to one of the sources of the Ganges River and needless to say the temperature of the water at the shrine is nearly freezing. Nevertheless, young and old will either bathe in the rushing cold stream or else pour bowls of water over themselves. Here is a brief description of one of the worshippers at the shrine: 'What frantic zeal in the temple! Men and women throw themselves with mad passion over the rough surface of the stone block of the god Kedarnath, which is about three feet high. Some kiss it, some embrace it with the whole body, some cry, some chant verses from the sacred books. The whole dark atmosphere of the chamber was charged with warm sincere devotion—it was deep sincerity, blind passionate love of a god.' It is an easy thing to criticize these folk and their idol worship, and yet we ought to ask ourselves in self-examination about the sincerity and fervency of our devotion to Him who is the 'express image of the Father'.

"Rapid transport throughout the field will be impossible this year because no petrol is available. Are you folks at home still getting something like ten or fifteen gallons a month? In one section of our field the government has called in all bicycles and prohibited the use of any such vehicle. That means we must walk or, if we are lucky, get a special pass!"

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